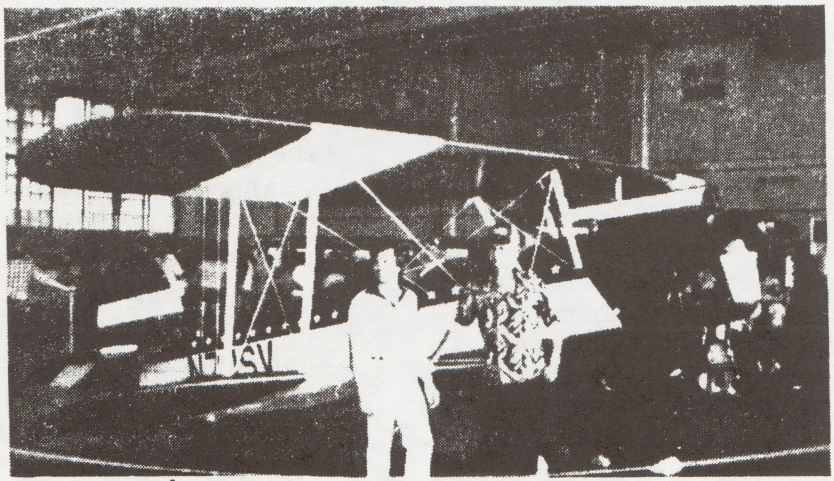
What's Happening In And About The
Yankee
Air Force
Museum
Hangar Happenin's

1997

Sept.

Yankee Air Museum P.O. Box 590 Belleville, MI 48112 Tel. 313/483-4030

HOW IT ALL BEGAN..

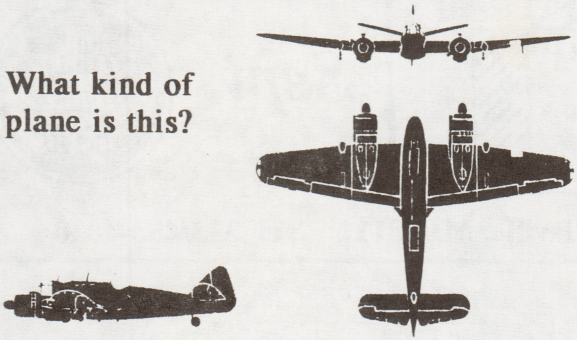


Dennis Norton and Gary Bassett with 711SV at Selfridge in 1981 the weekend they formalized the idea of the Yankee Air Force.

16 YEARS AGO !

Some articles and pictures are reprints from 1982 and 1983.

What kind of plane is this?



Length 41' 4" Span 57' 10"

A DREAM TAKES OFF

The Yankee Air Force started from
What really was a dream,
But an interest was created
And the crew was on the beam.
With a tailwind in their favor,
A little boost from here and there,
All hands were on the throttle,
Then, with tender loving care
It lifted, hit some crosswinds,
Straightened out and gathered speed;
The antenna stretched to heaven
With a message clear indeed.
It wasn't all fair weather though
And storms did give a scare;
So the ramp crew lit a beacon
And they brought her in by prayer.
The ground crew kept expanding
With some "Angels" in the crew;
The hangar got a facelift--
There is nothing they can't do.
Through rain and sleet and headwinds,
Bent props and blistered hands--
At Willow Run, The Yankee Air Force
In all it's glory--proudly stands.

--Graham Armstrong

FOUNDING OF THE YAF

by Philip R. Syler

Editor's Note: In the belief that those new members of the Yankee Air Force, who have joined since a similar article was published in the old Newsletter, would be interested in how the Yankee Air Force came into being, we present an interview with Willow Run Division President and one of the YAF founders, Dennis Norton.

The idea behind the beginning of the Yankee Air Force more or less surfaced during the summer months of 1981, when Gary Basset and I started kicking around the idea of *"...wouldn't it be great if we could find an old B-24 and bring it back to Willow Run and set it up as a static display?"* As many of you probably know, there used to be a B-24 on display in the Ypsilanti area on Michigan Avenue, right up until about the mid-1950s, when it had to be scrapped, because no one wanted to take care of it. I've always been a history nut, especially Michigan-Ypsilanti history, since my family has been in Ypsi for 150 years. And because at the time of our initial discussions about bringing a B-24 home to Ypsilanti, I owned a Stampe biplane and still own it, I'm especially interested in aviation history. We felt it would be a great idea to, as I said, bring a B-24 back to Willow Run for display and be able to document the history of that aircraft, the Willow Run Bomber Plant and the history tied up with the people, plant and bomber, that

played such a significant part in the allied victory over the axis in World War II. From these initial discussions, we began checking around to see if a B-24 was available. For a long while, our discussions about getting a B-24, bringing it back here and *"flying it around the area,"* took the form of joking around about it. As our discussions continued, we began to talk seriously about getting a group of interested people together and forming some type of organization, with our original intent, to obtain a B-24; we hadn't at that time expanded our thoughts about the possibility of obtaining other types of historic aircraft. In August of '81, Gary and I flew up to Selfridge for their Air Show and were talking with Col. Bob Stone who's in charge of the Selfridge Museum, to see if they could give us a hand in obtaining a B-24; or even, if we could give them a hand in bringing back one of these aircraft and putting it on display somewhere in the area. In fact, Gary and I stayed up there for all three days of their Air Show, talking with them about our project. In the course of the discussions this one weekend, it seemed more feasible and more feasible all the time to get more people interested in doing this. About this same time, (I've forgotten exactly what time period our discussion on forming a group took place) we were talking about what name we should give the organization. We talked about the possibility of going in with the Confederate Air Force, giving it some fancy name up here; Willow Run Confederate Air Force, or something like that. We talked about it and considered it and decided we really didn't want to become part of the C.A.F., because of their rigidity and a lot of the people up here, really didn't want to become part of that group; they sort of wanted to go out on their own. This was probably later in the fall, when we made that decision. We were sitting out at Willow Run, this was some time in August, one day and we were looking at an aircraft, a little plane that a friend of mine owned, a guy named Terry Walters and it was a plane, one of the American Yankees, it had little American Stars on the wheels. And Gary and I were joking and talking about this thing at the time and the idea popped into my head, looking at this little airplane sitting out there, Yankee Air Force; a perfect, perfect name. Up in the north, you're here at Willow Run Airport, you don't want to be named Confederate Air Force; Yankee Air Force is the appropriate name and as I said, this took place sometime in August of 1981.

After the Selfridge Air Show, we began talking with other people about it, probably the next person would have been Dennis Niveau, who got interested in it. He thought, as Gary Basset did, that we could form an organization around the theme of getting this B-24 and be able to take care of it, maintain it; possibly even restore it to flying condition. We decided to try and have a public meeting, sometime in late September, early October of 1981. We got a few other people interested, Ed Smith, Cindy Smith and Greg Smith were the next three people that got interested in what we were trying to do. And we decided at that time to try and have a

public meeting sometime in late September, just to see if there was enough interest in this group to make it into a public group, or try and go with it. We had that public meeting in mid, or the third week in September, it was held at Butler Aviation at Willow Run Airport. We drew nine or eleven people to that meeting, it was something like that; it's our history, we drew a few people and they felt we should proceed with the idea and it was decided to have an additional meeting in about a week, that was held at Butler also. We drew about 15 people to that meeting. It was then decided to have our first public meeting, to see how many people might be interested in the project. This first public meeting was held at Ann Arbor Airport in about early October. The meeting in September, that first meeting that we had, on the 24 of September, is the actual founding of the Yankee Air Force; this is what we use as our official founding date. We had two meetings at the Ann Arbor Airport, the first in early October and one, I believe, in early November. We decided to go for the big open house at Willow Run Airport on November 22, 1981, to see if we had any amount of public support and interest. We drew, I believe, about thirty people to our first meeting in Ann Arbor and out of that group, we elected our first board of directors. At our first open house at Willow, we had a B-25, the Stampe, Jack's Sky Raider, a DC-8, a twin Beech, a Lear Jet and a Swift. This was our first public presence as far as the Yankee Air Force was concerned. We had very good press coverage; Channel 2 came out and did a film story on it. We had I would guess, about a thousand people in attendance and we increased our membership by about one hundred. We had, four more meetings that year; we were having two meetings per month at that time, 'til the end of that year, (1981). And made the decision that this would be a major public museum; we were going to go for other things, other than just the B-24. These other meetings in late 1981, we held at Lee Kepke's place, Detroit Institute of Aeronautics and we were drawing a hundred people to these meetings, by the end of the year. We had increased our membership to something over a hundred, something like 125 to 150, at this time. And these people are all of our founders, you'd find them listed in the membership list, that, (as far as the Founders go) ended on December 31, 1981. This then was the real beginning of the Yankee Air Force.

In December, I began discussions with the Wayne County Road Commission on the possibility of getting the use of one of the unused hangars on the East side of the airport. I figured we'd only need or be able to use one of the small hangars, but figuring on using reverse psychology on the Road Commission, I thought I'd ask for the large hangar, at the corner of Beck and Ecorse Roads and therefore, they might give us the use of a small hangar by way of compensation, for not granting the use of the large one. I attended a number of meetings with the Road

Commission, at which I gave a number of presentations, telling them of our many dedicated members. The talked it over for a few minutes and said, *"...okay, you've got it."* They asked me to bring back a plan of how we'd restore the hangar, what the estimated cost of restoration would be and to what use the structure would be put. In January, I returned with a plan as to what the cost of restoration would be and how long I estimated restoration would take. The estimated time to bring the restoration to fruition was five years. We impressed them with our plan, we were extremely well organized, they were very pleased with what we'd come up with and they thought it was a great idea. They worked on the lease and gave us the go ahead. And, that's where we started.

At the time the Yankee Air Force began, two years ago, I of course, had no idea of what the organization would become; both as to the size of the membership, or the complexity. Remember, our original idea, was to just obtain a B-24 and bring it back to where so many machines began their life; and went on to write such a significant chapter in American Military history and the history of this area. When we got our hangar, that was probably when the notion of what the Yankee Air Force might become, first entered my mind. It was in late 1981, or early 1982 that I began broadening my views and expanding my ideas into seeing the possibility of what the Yankee Air Force could turn into, in the way of a major organization. At this time also, there was no thought about expanding the YAF into different divisions in different parts of the country; we were just going to be located here at Willow Run.

And here we are, a scant two years since our founding. We have a membership of over 1,400. Scores of dedicated, talented people, who've helped the Yankee Air Force become what it is today, respected and known nation wide, with Divisions in other states and others in the process of forming. In many ways, we are ahead of where I thought we'd be at this time. And I believe the members can be justly proud of our many accomplishments. And I look forward to what the Yankee Air Force will be in the future and feel we'll all be proud to have had a part in bringing that future to fruition.

C-47 Christening.

YAF FOUNDER'S DAY

Yankee Air Force Founder's Day, Saturday, September 24, 1983, 7 a.m. to midnight.

September 24, 1983 marks the second anniversary of the founding of the Yankee Air Force. We have a full day of activities planned to celebrate this event. Breakfast will be served between 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. Warbirds and other aircraft will be flying in to join in the celebration. An Airport Open House will be held between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Historic tours and present facilities hours will be given of the airport, including the tower and fire department. Tours of General Motors Hydramatic Plant will be given, (this is the old B-24 Production Facility, which was built in 1941). A Warbird Fly-by is scheduled in the afternoon about 3:00. At 5:00 our Official Ceremony is planned. We will be honoring the National Award Recipient for YAF Airman of the Year; and we'll be Dedicating and Christening our C-47. After presenting a final check to ERIM, to pay-off the note. All Founding Members, (those who joined before December 31, 1981) will be introduced and recognized; other dignitaries will be present including some people from Ford Motor Company who worked at Willow Run.

At 6:30 p.m. a dinner will be served, and, at 8:00 p.m. "Al Townsend and the Ambassadors" will be performing an evening of 1940's music, with dancing under the stars.

The Founder's Day event will develope into the major function of the Yankee Air Force over the years; and become our main fund raising activity. We hope to develope a major midwest Warbird Fly-In, tied in to Michigan Aviation Week, drawing upwards of 50 warbirds by 1985.

Fly in or drive in, but do come and join us for our celebration. This event will be second only to the Willow Run Air Show. Lots to do, lots to see!

Dennis Norton

THE PAST, THE PRESENT, THE FUTURE

The Yankee Air Force is entering its third year. Little did I realize back in 1980, what this idea would turn into. The work we've done and the tremendous accomplishments we've achieved, are now recognized across the country. Here at Willow Run, the new friendships and the comraderie are as much a part of the YAF as anything. The many accomplishments speak highly of all of you, whether you've worked on one project or 100 projects.

As an all volunteer group, we've had our share of problems, growing pains, communication gaps and disagreements. However, our accomplishments far outweigh our problems. As I told many people, when all this was just starting, the Yankee Air Force is a long term project. It will take us all of our first five years just to get this organization on its' feet and operating smoothly. What we are trying to do is very difficult and many of the results, will not be clearly seen for ten years or more. Nevertheless, each one of us will have participated in something to be proud of, something to

look back on years from now and say "...I helped start that and I worked hard for ten years as the Yankee Air Force blossomed into an internationally known and respected organization." Yes, you can be very proud of what you've done, what you've helped to start. And, you can look forward to the pride you'll enjoy ten years from now, when we've really reached our goal.

As we enter year number three, I wish to personally congratulate and thank all members, especially those of you who have worked so hard and so selflessly here at Willow Run, to turn our dream into reality. We've still got a long way to go. Enjoy it and work at it. Future generations will praise you for what you're doing today, for this part of American Heritage you're helping to preserve. Thanks! Dennis Norton

August, 1982

Willow Run Airport was built by the Army Air Force in 1940 and 1941 to serve as the airfield for the Ford Motor Company B-24 Bomber Plant. This plant was the first aircraft manufacturing plant to use Fords mass production techniques. This was one of the leading technological innovations of the time and allowed Ford to build over 8700 B-24s in 3 1/2 years. At its peak Ford employed 42,000 people at Willow Run and rolled out 1 B-24 every 55 minutes. The B-24 itself was remarkable aircraft able to fly long distances with over 8000 pounds of bombs. More B-24s were built (over 18,000) than any other aircraft in United States history and yet today only 1 is flying in the entire world, and only about 15 other non-flying examples are left. Of these only 2 or 3 are Ford built aircraft.

The Yankee Air Force was planned and organized in 1981 to research, restore, and preserve this all but forgotten history which is so much a part of our history. Our initial goals were to acquire one of the original Army Air Force hangars at Willow Run and restore it to its original 1942 condition and to acquire, restore and fly a Ford B-24.

Our long range goals include the acquisition and restoration of many other historical aircraft and the formation of a museum at Willow Run incorporating the YAF Flying Museum, a museum for related equipment and memorabilia and a library and research facility.

We started in September of 1981 with 5 people and as of July 10, 1982, we had grown to 780 members and are growing at a rate of about 10 members a week. Membership is open to anyone 18 or older, with charter membership dues being $25 or charter lifetime membership of $500. We are a Michigan Corporation and have official Tax Exempt status as a public museum under section 501 (c) (3) of the IRS codes. All donations are tax deductible.

We have accomplished our first goal, having obtained from Wayne County an initial 5 year lease with option on one of the original hangars and have begun a 5

year restoration program (entirely with volunteer labor and donated materials and funds). Our second goal is within reach as we have located a B-24 in England which is for sale and a number of restorable B-24s in India. We are actively negotiating purchases of 1 or more of these aircraft and hope to have something worked out by summer. Our long range goals are being worked on also. We are collecting items for our museum and are actively working on obtaining other types of historic aircraft. Good possibilities for other aircraft include a rare B-23, rare Grumman Guardian, an original C-47, and a RF-84F.

ABOUT THE YANKEE AIR FORCE... 1984

During World War II, B-24 bombers were built by Ford Motor Co. in what is now the GM Hydromatic Plant. The Yankee Air Force was formed with the intention of locating, bringing back to Willow Run, and restoring one of these bombers. Upon completion of the restoring project, the aircraft would be permanently displayed at the airport as part of the local Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti area history.

During the three years that the club has been organized, it has grown to over 1200 dedicated members, and has its own operational C-47 transport. In addition it has several military training and fighter aircraft on display. We are quite proud of the fact that we are the only private museum that has its very "own" B-52 bomber. This particular aircraft saw extensive service in Viet Nam, participating in over 800 bombing missions. We are currently in the process of acquiring three more aircraft for our museum.

Ironically, the club has not been able to satisfy its original reason for existence. So far, it has been unable to locate a B-24 that is in suitable condition for restoration. The search goes on; and in the meantime we continue to accumulate additional military aircraft, artifacts, and memorabilia.

The Yankee Air Force has its own hangar containing a library, plus several rooms devoted to specific periods of aviation history ranging from WW II to the present.

Right now, the hangar facilities are only open on Saturday from 8 to 4 (or by chance). It is suggested that you call first if you plan on visiting at any other time. The hangar phone is (313) 483-4030. Admission is free. Just take I-94 to the Belleville exit and head north on Belleville Road for about one mile to Tyler Road. (at the blinker light). Go west on Tyler Road for a mile to the stop sign. Head north for about !/4 mile and turn in at gate #3 of the airport. Immediately you will see our hangar with the "Yankee Air Force"" on the top of it - along with the tail of the B-52.

Any fool can criticize, condemn and complain --- and most do.

FLIGHT IN A FORD TRIMOTOR
by Daniel Tomczak

During Founders Day, The Kalamazoo Aviation Museum will bring their 1929 Ford Trimotor to the Yankee Air Force Museum at Willow Run Airport. Rides in this historic aircraft will be available for purchase. It is an experience like no other airplane by allowing a person to see and feel what early air travelers felt.

Air travel was in its infancy when the trimotor was designed. Previous aircraft had open cockpits and a cabin for passengers or mail. Mail had priority and sometimes passengers were bumped for mail. Aircraft manufacturers built aircraft that were better suited as passenger airplanes. This included Boeing 40, Curtiss Condor and the Foker Trimotor. These aircraft were mainly built of wood. After several structural failure crashes, manufacturers turned to metal aircraft.

Based on a Stout Aircraft design, the Ford Trimotor was one of the first of the new metal aircraft. It had a corrugated aluminum skin for added strength, (high strength aluminum alloys were not perfected yet). The Ford Trimotor established itself as safe and reliable. The public accepted this safe transportation which led to increased profitability for airlines and the start of commercial aviation.

The Kalamazoo aviation museum has helped to bring back the early days of airline travel with their restored 1929 Ford Trimotor. Last May, I had the opportunity to fly in the Ford Trimotor.

Upon entering the aircraft there are single rows of seats along both sides of the aircraft. The cockpit section is raised by a couple of feet. There is no doorway separating the cockpit from the passengers, so all of the action in the cockpit can be viewed.

After fastening the seat belt, and hearing the preflight briefing, the engines were started and the aircraft was moved for takeoff position. As takeoff power was applied, the first thing that is noticed is the noise which seem to reverberate with the corrugated metal skin. This is why it was called the "Tin Goose". It is loud but not as loud as the B-25, or B-17. Then as the aircraft picks up speed the external flying wires become taunt and give out a loud sounding twang. In a very short distance the airplane becomes airborne. Engine power is reduced and the engine noise lessens.

I thought flying in the Trimotor was going to be like the C-47. This was not the case. First the airplane seems to be crawling over the ground, although in late 20's this must have seemed fast when compared to a Model T Ford traveling over a bumpy dirt road. It was a hot and windy day on the day of this flight, and every thermal was picked up by that large metal wing, to give a slightly bumpy ride. Turns felt like we were skidding across the sky, completely uncoordinated. The straight sided fuselage being blown by the wind which showed how ineffective the small rudder was. It was actually fun although I do not think the a long flight would have been comfortable (especially for a person who becomes airsick easily). All too soon the Trimotor was in the landing pattern. The

long stroke landing gear, designed for rough grass strips, made for a smooth landing.

I highly recommend that people take advantage of the opportunity to fly in this classics airliner during Founder's Day Celebration. It is an experience worth the small cost of a flight.

For an excellent book on early airline travel, read "FOOTSTEPS IN THE SKY" an informal review of U.S. airlines inflight service - 1920's to present, by Helen E. McLaughlin.

HOW DO YOU FIT ALL OF THOSE AIRPLANES IN THAT SMALL HANGAR SPACE? by Daniel Tomczak

This is a question asked by many Sunday museum visitors, as they see three large flyable aircraft return from an airshow. As the visitors watch in amazement, the C-47, B-25, and B-17 are put away, and the hangar doors are closed and chained in less than half an hour!

There is a special crew - "The Sunday Aircraft Retrieval Crew" that is responsible for putting aircraft away. During normal Sunday museum hours, the crew is involved with Museum admissions, Gift shop retail sales, restoration of the Lodestar, tour guides, and other museum activities. It is after the museum officially closes that the retrieval crew comes into being. Typically the museum aircraft are due back around 8:00PM.

So there are several hours to pass out the barbecue grill. Out come sausages, hamburgers, corn, watermelon, and sometimes "Burke Beans". Guests are always welcome (even seagulls). After dinner, the stories start, usually about airplanes, or the museum, all good conversations. In the background is an aircraft scanner, tuned to the tower frequency and Air Traffic Control. Usually there are museum visitors who extend their visit just to see the sight of a flying WWII aircraft. Often there are quite a few who stay or go out for a bite to eat and return to see the aircraft.

As the aircraft arrival draws nearer, everybody listens to the scanner for any transmission from the Museum's aircraft. As soon as a transmission is heard, the crew springs into action because the airplane is less than 5 minutes away. Aircraft directors are sent out on the taxiway, and tugs with towbars are moved in to position.

It is hoped that the C-47 is the first aircraft to land, because it must go in the hangar first. If other aircraft arrive first, they must wait for the C-47.

The aircraft are marshalled in, allowed to do their run-up to scavenge the engine oil and then brought into a position where they can be shut down and tugged. The cabin doors are opened to let out tired airshow crew. During this time the towbars are attached, and the aircraft is prepared to be moved in the hangar. Wingwalkers and spotters take up a position around the aircraft as the aircraft is tugged into the hangar. From experience, the crew knows where to watch and how to direct the experienced tug driver (who lately has been a 17 year old junior member). As soon as the aircraft is in it right place, chocked and the next aircraft is tugged in.

Before long all three aircraft are in the hangar and the doors are being closed.

It is quite a show to see the flying aircraft return and the Sunday retrieval crew in action. Come out and join the group. They are always looking for new volunteers. It happens on weekends when the airplanes are at an away airshow. Check the airshow schedule for the next event.

Ron Black (Life), Dick Ohlinger (Life), D.J. Burrier, Kim Schmit, Harold Miller, Chris Francis, David Fergus, Mike Wolf, George Bonnett (Juneau,AK), William Brooks, Bill Sherman, Dan Benedis (Phoenix), Mark Dinius, Harry Ahlborn, Dayton Miller, Steve Hassell, Diane Philpot, Howard Clark, Bradley Giddings, Michael Anderson, Robert Gittleman and Brian Walker.

BH

The two hardest things to handle in life are failure and success.

MEMBERSHIP RESOURCE COORDINATOR

As most of you are aware, the Museum easily brings in many new members. Retaining this level of membership has been difficult. A position has been formed, namely, the Member Resource Coordinator, to address this issue. I have taken on the role of Coordinator and have formed a small committee which will implement a plan and develop a program to increase our renewal rate.

While all members join believing in what the Museum stands for, many look forward to participating in hangar activities. Our committee will keep all of our new mwmbers updated and informrd, and work toward connecting them with those departments they have shown an interest in. If anyone would like to help on this committee, or has any issues, concernes or ideas, plesae contact me at 313-721-5523 (or couchman@umich.edu). Bob Seaton (seaton@provide.net), or Dan Tomczak (313-769-6866) or see us in the 2nd floor meeting room office on Saturdays.

Cynthia Couchman
Member Resource Coordinator.

Do not criticize another until you have walked for a day in his moccasins.
—Old Indian Saying

Pictures fr

1982

Yankee Air Force charter year Board of Directors: Front row L to R; Greg Smith, Harry Terpstra, Phil Lundy, Tom Wilkins, Elmer Spencer; Back row L to R; Patti Meyer, George Taylor, Dennis Norton, Cindy Smith.

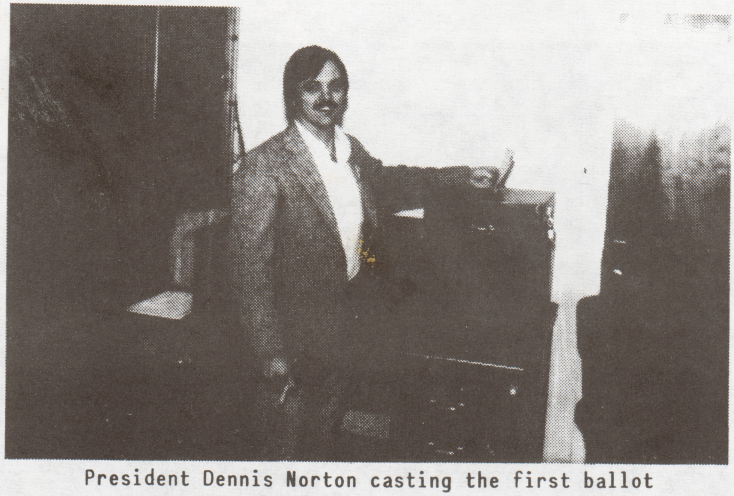
1940's DINNER DANCE

The Yankee Air Force is holding a 1940's style Dinner/Dance at the hangar on Saturday, August 14, 1982 at 7:30 PM. We've hired the same band we had at the Air Show, "Al Townsend and the Ambassadors", a 1940's 17 piece big band. They'll be set up under ERIMs C-47 again and we'll have many other World War II aircraft on display as well as some 1940's cars. Some members are planning on dressing in 1940 clothes or uniforms. Otherwise the dress will be dresses for ladies, and dress slacks for men. The dance is open to the public. All members should try to sell tickets and bring friends and family to the dance. This is the first Yankee Air Force social event as well as a fund-raiser for the B-24. The cost is $15 per person which covers dinner, beer, and set-ups for mixed drinks (please bring your own liquor if you wish to have mixed drinks), and the band. The dinner is a catered buffet. Please support this, our first big fund raiser and social event, and meet your fellow YAF members. The band is great!! Call Cindy Smith, 487-5965 if you can sell any tickets or need tickets yourself.

om the past...

1983

Newly installed Willow Run Division Board. Back row; L to R, Dave Cunningham, Frank Modlinski, Bill Wier, Paul Kasmer, Bob Smith. Front row; L to R. Audrey Ray, Dennis Norton, T.J. Wilkins, Nancy Lockwood.



President Dennis Norton casting the first ballot of the first National Election, Nov., 3, 1982.

The first President of the Yankee Air Force.

Left to Right; Dorothy Haener, Val Clark, Dayna Eubank, January, 25, 1983
The Yankee Air Force received a call from Channel 7 News on January, 25th inquiring if they could use our hangar and a WW II vintage aircraft that day as a background for a follow-up interview after a "Winds of War" segment. Bill Abbott, Larry Silver and Bill Ray met with Dayna Eubank and her producer, Val Clark, and their charming guest, Dorothy Haener, who had worked as an inspector at the Willow Run Bomber Plant during the war.

Bill Ray (left) and Olin Parks, working on the C-47 at Willow Run.

YANKEE AIR MUSEUM

1997-98 Schedule of Events

All events at Willow Run Airport, Belleville MI, unless specified.

Sep 20	Founders Day Big Band Dinner Dance in the hangar. Live music by ONE BEAT BACK - a 17 piece band. Everybody welcome. Ford Trimotor rides available 6:00PM until dusk (weather permitting). Guest appearance by a Mime Artist. Dinner Dance tickets $30 per person. Doors open at 6:30 PM Dinner at 7:30 PM
Sep 21	Founders Day Celebration and Open House. Come celebrate the 16th anniversary of the Yankee Air Force Museum. Free admission to the museum. Breakfast from 9:00 AM - 12:00 noon. Special Guest Aircraft - 1929 Ford Trimotor and World War II P-47 Thunderbolt. Ford Trimotor rides available all day. Flying aircraft include the B-17, B-25 and C-47, and possibly more (Weather Permitting). Many special activities planned.
Oct 11	Ballots for Yankee Air Force Museum officer positions are due at the Headquarters by 12:00 Noon.
Oct	Flying season ends. Heavy maintenance and restoration work begins. The museum needs help in many activities and projects.
Dec 13	Annual Holiday Party and pot luck dinner. Bring a dish to pass.
Jan-Feb 1998	Special Winter hours at the Museum. Open on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday only. Normal Museum hours resume in March.
Mar 21	Polishing party for the B-17, B-25, and C-47. Everybody welcome. Last year's event was a great success and a lot of fun. Please bring one can of Mothers Mag & Aluminum Polish and 5-6 soft cotton cloths. The shining will begin at 9:00 AM. Lunch will be provided.
Mar 28	SPRING DINNER DANCE at the warm facilities of UAW Hall #735, 48055 Michigan Ave., Canton. Doors open at 6:30PM . Dinner at 7:30PM. Proceeds go to the New Hangar Fund.
April/May	Airplanes start flying. Bring a lunch and enjoy the sights and sounds from our picnic facilities.
May 25	Memorial Day Observance and Open House. Pancake breakfast from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon. Fly-ins of aircraft are encouraged. Many museum aircraft and displays open, including the B-17, B-25 and C-47. Watch demonstrations of a working Link trainer. Refreshments, cockpit photos, and dog tags available.

Watch for a bus trip to a local aviation museum (Kalamazoo or Dayton) in April or May details to follow.

ELECTION of 1997
Candidates

August 15, 1997-

President:	
Frank Modlinski	#G-0238
Vice-President:	
Donald Harner	#L-0986
Directors:	
Deane Baker	#G-3187
Cynthia Couchman	#G-5241
John E. Day	#G-5239
James D. Hill	#L-2305
Thomas E. Lohr	#G-5042
Mary Jane M. Medlock	#L-5434
Ken Murray	#G-2147
Nina S, Smith	#G-2390
Erwin A.J. Stirnweis	#G-4412
George D. Whitfield	#G-0439

Thanks to **Tom Lohr** for his quick response to the Museums' request for a model of "Yankee Lady". It has been installed in the hangar in the YAF room. Come up and see it sometime!

PB4Y-2 PRIVATEER
by Al Scotford

The 1988 PB4Y Privateer all-squadron reunion is being planned for Belleville, Michigan (they spelled it 'Bellview'). In 1997 it was held between Memorial Day and May 28th. The 1998 reunion is being planned by Ron Sathre of 312 San Andreas Dr., Union City, California, 94587-2756. I don't know if Western Pacific Airlines (800-679-3720) will be giving discounted air fares in 1998. It is unknown who will be doing the coordinating at this end. Perhaps George Whitfield or Hal Sherman will know. Anyway, we look forward to seeing the PB4Y reunion next year.

On the weekend of August 16th, the crew was back to work on the bomb bay door tracks. It seems that there were some problems with the earlier ones. Work continues on the right hand side turret.

One of the other projects that was being worked on, out at the barn, was the L-19 wing. That has been finished and some of the people who have seen it said it was an excellent job. "Well done" accolades should be given to Brad Alsted, John Woodruff and Joe Sottile in Monroe.

One final thing is; Best wishes for a speedy recovery should go to Charlie Rajda, who is back home now. Also included in these "best wishes" should be Herb Proctor who is recovering from his second knee replacement.

Work still continues on our PB4Y-2 and more into the future.

YANKEE AIR FORCE LOGO

by Philip R. Syler

Since we are devoting so much of this issue to Founder's Day, we thought our members and readers might be interested in how the Yankee Air Force Logo came into being.

At the YAF meeting of November 5, 1981, it was decided that an emblem or logo should be designed, so as to give the Yankee Air Force a visual identity, that would be of a uniform nature. At this time the announcement was made to the membership that anyone wishing to do so, could submit a design for consideration as the official Yankee Air Force emblem.

There were a total of eight submissions. On November 18, 1981, at the membership meeting, a vote was taken on which of the eight submissions, the membership felt was the best one submitted. Two designs garnered the most votes. It was then decided that these two designs should be rendered in a larger size and in color, for a final vote to select the winner. The two designs were rendered as per instructions and at the December 3, 1981 meeting, a vote was taken to select the best of the two designs. We all know which design was selected. The first time our new logo was used was in January 1982.

We cannot tell you the names of all the individuals who submitted logo designs, since some of the names were lost, (to make the voting fair, no names were allowed on the designs that were submitted and as a consequence, due to much "water going over the dam" in the time period since, many of the names of those who submitted designs have been forgotten). However, all that really matters, at this point in time is the name of the person whose design won and is being used as the YAF Logo; Harry Terpstra.

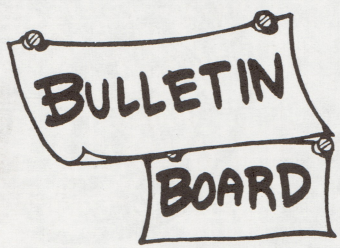
As a further point of interest, we thought the membership might be interested in seeing photographs of those other designs that were submitted.

Dots and Dashes on ring spell out in Morse code: 1903 to 1981 YAF. This design is thought to have been based on the symbol used by Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker's "Lafayette Escadrille," (the World War I American Volunteer Fighter Squadron), the famous "Hat in the Ring Squadron."

PURPOSE of THE YANKEE AIR FORCE

This Corporation is organized exclusively to obtain, restore, preserve, and operate historic and vintage aircraft, related components for historical research and public educational purposes, and to establish a museum to facilitate the public display and exhibition of such items.

Article II of Y.A.F. by-laws



Announcement

The **Hangar Happenin's** newsletter is available to all members at the general meetings on the first Wednesday of every month. This newsletter is usually not mailed because the **"Yankee Wings"** is our official publication that is professionally type set and mailed. We have decided to mail this edition so that all of our Yankee members could be brought up-to-date on our events and the exciting things that are happening every month right here at Willow Run. We hope that you will enjoy this edition.

the **Yankee Air Force Executive Committee**

B-24 Liberator

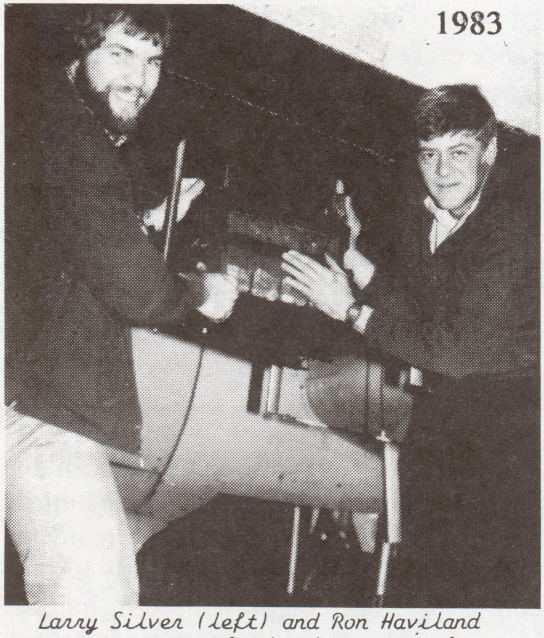
B-24 Where are you?
We've searched the country o'er,
For one that left the Willow Run,
Somehow, survived the War.

We want you in our hangar,
Our museum is an obsession,
And we are going to track you down
To be our prized possession.

We have other planes in mind
And some on hand to view,
But we want your historic frame
And honored place reserved for you.

Graham Armstrong
YAF #1322
10-27-83

1983



Larry Silver (left) and Ron Haviland removing one of the batteries from the C-47 in the YAF Hangar.

HELP WANTED
Urgent Need at H.Q./ Willow Run

(1) Assistant to the National Secretary;
Duties: Light word processing/ com puter work and file organizing and filing.
Office skills helpful. Work may be done days or evenings - after training.
Once a week would keep it current.
Contact Bill Hanney or Barb Sutton at the Museum.

Gift Shop Staff...
(1) Sales and stock staff needed to cover Wednesdays and/or Fridays. Easy to learn systems.
Commitment to one or two days a week is needed.
(2) Computer worker, with some experi ence, needed to learn the Gift Shop inventory and billing systems. Need commitment of at least one day or evening a week.
Contact Barb Sutton or Louise Greenwald at the Museum.

These needs are immediate and urgent. They are critical to the smooth operation of the business of running our Museum. Be part of the team, take on some responsibility. You will enjoy being involved.

Say It In The Hangar Happenin's

A HISTORY OF WILLOW RUN AND THE YANKEE AIR FORCE HANGAR

The hangar building that now houses the Yankee Air Force Museum was built in 1941 for the United States Army Air Corps. It was the main school building for five adjacent buildings. The adjacent buildings taught electrical wiring, hydraulics, props, engines and cable rigging of the airplanes. This main building had 62 rooms in it. It could store two B-24 Liberator Bombers. These planes were built by the Ford Motor Company at Willow Run and by Consolidated Aircraft in Los Angeles, California. The Army Air Corps maintenance personnel that graduated from this building numbered over 8,000.

This building, following the war, became the property of Kaiser-Frazer Motor Car Company, who also kept his personal airplanes and the high powered Allison Engine speed boats here. Kaiser-Frazer Co. also built C-119 "Flying Boxcar" Cargo planes here, in addition to their automobiles, on parallel assembly lines in the building which is now the Hydramatic Transmission Plant of General Motors.

Willow Run airport was owned by the University of Michigan after World War II and maintained it until just a few years ago. It was sold to Wayne County Road Commission, its present owners.

It was in the mid-60s when the commercial airlines moved to Wayne County (Metro) Airport, from Willow Run.

The University of Michigan developed the laser beam, which is so popular throughout the world today, at the Northeast end of this very building. This was known at that time as the Environmental Control Research Institute.

The Yankee Air Force Museum is the new resident of this building. We have over 1,500 members throughout the world, including Australia, Canada and England.

The Yankee Air Force Museum consists of the hangar bay in which are displayed historic military and civilian aircraft. Rooms upstairs include memorabilia of World War I and World War II, a library, a plastic model display and a Theatre. On display are items donated by members and friends. In the World War I room, we have a wall mural painted in oils by Jack Stankrauff, a member of the Yankee Air Force. In one of the aircraft on display in the hangar, is the largest radial engine that was built in World War II, that of the "Skyraider."

Our own C-47 is of the same vintage that flew the Burma Hump in World War II. It also pulled two Waco Gliders that had a one way ticket from England to France on D-Day. This airplaine was considered one of the most durable all purpose aircraft ever to see service and has been in service longer than any other aircraft, being in service since its inception in 1935, (our C-47 was built in 1944). It was used extensively by parachutists over Europe and in the Pacific Theatre of Operations in the Second World War.

The BT-13, AT-6 and the Fairchilds which are on display were used as training planes during WWII.

The red, white and blue biplane on display is a French Air Force trainer built in 1953 and is owned by our YAF President.

The Yankee Air Force currently has fifteen aircraft on display in our hangar. Some aircraft are still undergoing restora-

tion, while others have either been restored or maintained in first class condition by their various owners. We invite you to come to the museum for a tour. We can guarantee you won't be bored!

This article was compiled by Yankee Air Force member Russ Kenyon.

THE BLUE AND WHITE ANGELS

Smartly dressed in blue and white
The Yankee Airforce gals
Carry on from day to day
Assuring there's no disarray.
You may see them day or night
Rest assured we'll be alright
Sign on, and they're your pals.

Committees everywhere you turn
They all know their duties
If you don't help, you're missing much,
They guide us through air shows and such.
There is no pay - our love they earn
And they have energy to burn,
These Y.A.F. rare beauties.

Two or three of them may try
To get you in their crew,
You may think those Yankee dears
Are always swamped with volunteers
But no - they plead (and almost cry)
"We need some muscle here Big Guy.
We have a job for you."

An inspiration to us all
For sure a guiding light,
They help in any way they can
And stand beside their Yankee man.
With their help we shall not fall,
Let's be ready when they call -
These angels - Blue and White.

Graham Armstrong
YAF #1322
6/6/83

YANKEE AIR FORCE HISTORY

With so many new members, it's appropriate to give a brief history of the Yankee Air Force.

Sometime in mid-1980, the idea for the Yankee Air Force was hatched by Dennis Norton and Gary Bassett. It was mostly just an idea with little hope of becoming reality. But the more they talked about it the more feasible it seemed. The original idea centered exclusively around the B-24 and even though we've greatly broadened the scope of the YAF, the B-24, because of its history at Willow Run, remains the centerpiece of the YAF idea.

Shortly after Gary and Dennis began talking about the YAF, they caught the interest of Dennis Neveu. These three should probably be recognized as the original founders of the Yankee Air Force idea. Shortly thereafter, Ed Smith, Greg Smith, and Cindy Smith became interested and it was decided to have a meeting to see if anyone else was interested. That meeting on September 23, 1981, at Butler Aviation was the beginning of the Yankee Air Force. Attending were Dennis Norton, Brian Conley, Ed Smith, Jack Taylor, Paul Plum, Cindy Smith, Emile Grenier, Patti Meyer, Mike LaPine, Elmer Spencer, and Bill Lowery. At that point the interest seemed to be there for a public meeting. That meeting was held on October 8, 1981, at Ann Arbor Airport with about 30 people attending. The following officers were elected: President-Dennis Norton, Vice-President-Greg Smith, Secretary-Cindy Smith, Treasurer-Patti Meyer, Board members Harry Terpstra (membership), Elmer Spencer (aircraft procurement), Phil Lundy, Tom Wilkins. Dues were set at $25 and the YAF was off and flying. The first Board of Directors meeting was October 15, 1981. Meetings were held every 2 weeks through 1981 and our first open house, held on November 22, 1981, drew over 1000 people. We became a corporation on November 17, 1981. During December of 1981 we began thinking about a hangar and after 3 meetings with the Wayne County Road Commission we received a 5 year lease on Hangar 2041. The YAF has grown far beyond the expectations of those first organizers, and the progress we've made so far has been nothing short of phenominal. Everyone keep up the tremendous effort and nothing will stop us short of our goal.

The following poem, written by YAF member Graham Armstrong, YAF #1322, really expresses our feelings about this great aircraft; and, about all of our other aircraft.

RETIRED WARRIOR

Big black Stratofortress,
Boeing B-52D, From years
of world travel you're
parked for us all to see.
Stories logged with all your
miles,
refueling in the air, your
last trip,
a happy one as hundreds
met you there.
Now like other warbirds,
no searchlights,
bullets, flak;
you have served your
country well
with trips to hell and back.
Not forgotten in our care
you rest with empty tanks.
Silhouette, with open arms,
as others join our ranks.

The secret of happiness is not found in doing what you like, but in liking in what you do.

Experience is the one thing you have plenty of when you're too old to get the job.

If you haven't any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble.

TO ALL MEMBERS

Phil Luke is ailing a bit. He is at an assisted living apartment. He would like to hear from us. His address is:

Phil Luke
American House
14265 Middlebelt Rd.
Livonia, MI 48154
(313) 513-4922

AUGUST 1997 MEMBERSHIP MEETING RAFFLE WINNER

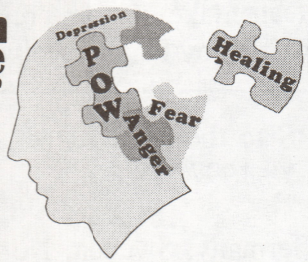
50/50 Drawing.....Tom Lohr.
Tom donated his prize to the B-25 fund.
BH

Answer to "What kind of plane is this"

BRISTOL "BEAUFIGHTER II"
Fighter

Long-range two-place fighter powered by two Bristol Hercules 1,600 hp. engines extending well beyond the nose. Under-slung motors and dihedral tail plane are characteristic. Late model has Rolls-Royce motors.

Connie's Corner



Ex-POW's

Least We Forget...Because They Cannot Forget And Are Still Struggling For Their Freedom!

In Tampa, Florida, there are two former POW's from two different wars, and from two different theaters of war. Neither ex-POW knew each other before 1992.

Charles Davis, age 65, served in Korea from 1949 to 1953. Davis was a POW for 33 months.

Eugene Nagy, age 73 (AAF) served in Germany from 1943 to 1945. Nagy was a POW for 10 months.

For years, both men couldn't talk about the chilling torments they both endured as POW's... Not with family, friends, co-workers, and anyone connected officially to a Veterans program. Now in 1997, both men share experiences with each other and the public as they promote the benefits of an ex-POW support group at the James A. Haley Veterans Affairs Hospital in Tampa, Florida.

Obesity is also prevalent among many of the ex-POW's, because they promised themselves (while in captivity) that they would never be hungry again after near starvation or eating bug & worm infested food.

The war by war breakdown statistics of surviving POW's are: from W.W.I (40); W.W.II (57,119); Korean War (2,985), Vietnam War (560); Persian Gulf War (23); and Somalia Conflict (1).

Reference: Tampa Tribune (4/8/97)

WHAT KIND OF "PEOPLE" ARE YOU?

It has been said there are four groups of people:

1. Those that **help** make things happen.
2. Those that **watch** things happen.
3. Those that **don't know** things are happening.
4. Those that **don't care** what is hap pening.

What kind of people are you?

W. Hanbury

Temper is a funny thing --- it spoils children, ruins men and strenghtens steel.

The senior class was asked to tell what books helped them the most. One senior replied: "Mom's cookbook and Dad's checkbook."

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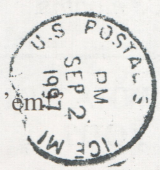
VISITORS to the MUSEUM
JULY, 1997

31 states and Germany, Sweden, Norway, Canada, France, Scotland, Spain, Finland, Poland and Denmark.

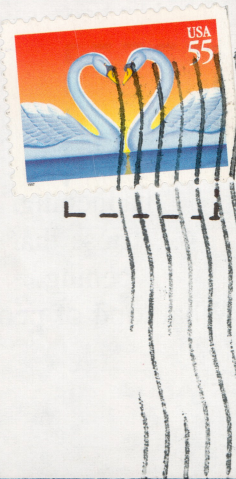
Past Events of Interest
September
2 V-J Day, 1945.
18 Army Air Force becomes the US Air Force, 1947.
19 POW-MIA Day.

Wife: "Where are you going?"
Hubby: "Skeet shooting."
Wife: "Well, don't expect me to clean 'em."



Yankee Air Museum
P.O. Box 590
Belleville, MI 48112-0590

First Class Mail



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DAVID SAUNDERS
OR CURRENT RESIDENT
5010 CLEARVIEW
CLARKSTON MI 48348